DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22217

IN REPLY REFER TO

Information Sheet

Philadelphia Experiment; UFO's

Over the years the Navy has received innumerable queries about the socalled "Philadelphia Experiment" or "Project" and the alleged role of the Office of Naval Research (ONR) in it. The majority of these inquiries are directed to the Office of Naval Research or to the Fourth Naval District in Philadelphia. The frequency of these queries predictably intensifies each time the experiment is mentioned by the popular press, often in a science fiction book.

The genesis of the Philadelphia Experiment myth dates back to 1955 with the publication of The Case for UFO's by the late Morris K. Jessup.

Some time after the publication of the book, Jessup received correspondence from a Carlos Miguel Allende, who gave his address as R.D. #1, Box 223, New Kensington, PA. In his correspondence Allende commented on Jessup's book and gave details of an alleged secret naval experiment conducted by the Navy in Philadelphia in 1943. During the experiment, according to Allende, a ship was rendered invisible and teleported to and from Norfolk in a few minutes, with some terrible aftereffects for crew members. Supposedly, this incredible feat was accomplished by applying Einstein's "unified field" theory. Allende claimed that he had witnessed the experiment from another ship and that the incident was reported in a Philadelphia newspaper. The identity of the newspaper has never been established. Similarly, the identity of Allende is unknown, and no information exists on his present address.

In 1956 a copy of Jessup's book was mailed anonymously to ONR. The pages of the book were interspersed with hand written comments which alleged a knowledge of UFO's, their means of motion, the culture and ethos of the beings occupying these UFO's, described in pseudo-scientific and incoherent terms.

Two officers, then assigned to ONR, took a personal interest in the book and showed it to Jessup. Jessup concluded that the writer of the comments on his book was the same person who had written him about the Philadelphia Experiment. These two officers personally had the book retyped and arranged for the reprint, in typewritten form, of 25 copies. The officers and their personal belongings have left ONR many years ago, and ONR does not have a file copy of the annotated book.

Personnel at the Fourth Naval District believe that the questions surrounding the so-called "Philadelphia Experiment" arise from quite routine research which occurred during World War II at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Until recently, it was believed that the foundation for the apocryphal stories arose from degaussing experiments which have the effect of making a ship undetectable or "invisible" to magnetic mines. Another likely genesis of the bizarre stories about levitation, teleportation and effects on human crew members might be attributed to experiments with the generating plant of a destroyer, the USS TIMMERMAN. In the 1950's this ship was part of an experiment to test the effects of a small, high frequency generator providing 1,000hz instead of the standard 400hz. The higher frequency generator produced corona discharges, and other well known phenomena associated with high frequency generators. None of the crew suffered effects from the experiment.

ONR has never conducted any investigations on invisibility, either in 1943 or at any other time (ONR was established in 1946.) In view of present scientific knowledge, ONR scientists do not believe that such an experiment could be possible except in the realm of science fiction.